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EXCALIBUR

FORWARD
BY
JAMES
CAMP
★

PHALANX COVENANT

LIFE
SIGNS



WITNESS THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

WITNESS THE HORROR THAT WILL SIGNAL THE
DEMISE OF LIFE AS WE KNOW IT.





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THE PHALANX COVENANT

SCOTT LOBBELL
PLOT
KEN LASHLEY & STEVE EPTING
SCRIPT
PENED
MOY CARRIN FLOYD
CANDERARIO & LIVESAY
CHARS. MATTHEWS
GOLDCHIT
BOB HARRISON
GROUP EDITOR

TODD DEZARO
SCRIPT
& STEVE EPTING
PENED
DAVE SHARPE
BATES
SUZANNE GAFFNEY
EDITOR
TOM ONIHALLO
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BOOK TWO:
LIFE SIGNS

PART THREE:

THE LIGHT OF A TAINTED DAWN

LOOK
WELL AND
BEHOLD!
THE RABBIT
SPINE!

OUR BEACON TO THE
STARS-- OUR HOMAGE TO
OUR FATHERS!

ONCE THE TOWER IS
COMPLETED, WE WILL SEND
THE MESSAGE TO ALL AN-
DESIGNS-- THE FORERUNNERS
OF THE BLOOD DESTINY!
BARKLOO!

--WE WILL EXTEND THE INVITATION,
AND AGON BE JOINED BY OTHERS LIKE
OURSELVES-- ENOUGH TO HERALD FOR
THIS PLANET.

THE AGE OF
THE PHALANX!!!

AND YOU, BARKLOO,
HAVE DONE WELL TO LIVE
ONCE COMPLETING THAT YOU
WERE BUT A PUPPET TO
OUR MACHINATIONS.



WE HAD
DOUBTS SENDING
SUCH A **SUBTLE**
SUMMONS TO ONE AS
WILLFUL AND INDEPENDENT
AS YOURSELF.

WE ARE PLEASED
WITH THE RESULTS—
AND EVEN MORE SO
WITH THE PRESENCE
OF **THE MAKER**!



FOR IT IS
HIS "**SIGHT**"
THAT WILL HELP
TO USHER IN
THE NEW DAWN...



COME, FORGE
AND YOU WILL BE
"MIDWIFE" TO THE
BIRTH OF A **BOLD**
NEW LIFE
FORM!



YOU ARE
SHINAR. I
KNOW OF YOU
THROUGH THE
COLLECTIVE
INTELLIGENCE.



WELL, AH'VE HAD ABOUT AS
MUCH O' THIS AS AH CAN TAKE...



"...NOT THE FRIEND
WE LOVED."

YOU'RE RIGHT!
POUG DOESN'T
MATTER NOW--
THERE ARE
INNOCENTS TO
BE PROTECTED!

RUN!!

RUN
WHILE YE
CAN--!

I'LL NOT STAND
BY AN' WATCH THESE
MONSTERS TREAT YE
POOR PEOPLE LIKE--

???

CANNAE
YE HEAR
ME ???

DINNA
JUST STAND
THERE--

--RUN.



YOUR ATTEMPT TO
LIBERATE THESE
PEOPLE IS
FUTILE--

--AND IT IS RIDICULOUS
FOR YOU TO HOPE THAT
YOU COULD POSSIBLY
OVERPOWER THE
PHALANK!

WHY?
BECAUSE
IT IS WHAT
MUST BE
DONE.

FOR
ABUSING
YOUR
TRUST--
FORGIVE
ME, RAHNE.

OH,
POUG--!

NO.

WHY--?

...AND FORGIVE YOURSELF YOUR
FOOLISH NAIVETE!

SHIVAR, DESPITE MY "CURSE"
OF COGNITIVE INDEPENDENCE--

--AND
TRANSPARENT !!!

-- I HAVE SEARCHED
THE FORMS OF
THE TWO MUTANT
REBELS, THAT I
MIGHT PROVE MY
LOYALTY TO THE
PHALANK.

DESIGNATE -- DOUBTLOCK--
YOUR ACT OF REALTY IS
BOTH IMPRESSIVE --

I AWAIT
YOUR BIDDING.

THE ONLY
ROLE YOU'LL
PLAY IN THE
HISTORY
OF THE
PHALANK--

KRUNT

--IS AS YET
ANOTHER
BUILDING BLOCK
IN THE BABEL
SPIRE!

GUARDS...!!



...THROW
THIS TRAITOR
INTO THE
DEACON !!

HIS MASS, AS WELL
AS THAT OF THE TWO HE
HAS SUBJUGED WILL
SERVE US WELL AS
GENETIC FODDER
IN THE TOWER'S
CONSTRUCTION.

BEGIN MOVING THE
HUMANS IN AT A FASTER
RATE, AS WELL. THEIR MIND-
LESS FORMS WILL PROVIDE
AN EXCELLENT CONDUIT
FOR THE TRANSMISSION
OF THE PRODIGAL
SIGNAL.

...CALLING
TO OUR FATHERS
ACROSS THE
STARS !!

AND AS FOR
YOU, FORGE--

--COME NOW AND
EMBRACE YOUR
DESTINY...





ON A WINDSWEST BLUFF
OVERLOOKING THE NORTH
SEA, STANDS THE CENTURIES-
OLD MONT SAINT FRANCIS...

--A LONG ABANDONED
FRANCISCAN MONASTERY,
CURRENTLY PLAYING HOST
TO A RATHER LINGUISTIC
GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS.

FOR IT IS HERE THAT
PROFESSOR CHARLES
XAVIER HAS GATHERED
TOGETHER HIS "FAMILY"...

--THE MUTANT TEAMS
OF X-FORCE, X-FACTOR
AND EXCALIBUR.

--MARSHALING THEIR
FORCES IN A LAST-DITCH
EFFORT TO DEFEAT THE
EVER-ADVANCING PHALANX.

AS FIELD-LEADER OF THE
"BACK-UP" TEAM, IT IS A
PENSIVE ALEX SUMMERS,
AKA HAWK, WHO TAKES
ADVANTAGE OF THE "DOWN-
TIME" WITH A LITTLE
FRESH AIR...

WHAT WOULD
THEY DO IF
THEY KNEW...?

...AND
REFLECTION.

HOW WOULD
MANKIND REACT IF
THEY KNEW HOW VERY
CLOSE THEY WERE TO
TOTAL EXTINCTION?

FACE IT, ALEX,
THERE'S A PART OF
YOU THAT WANTS TO BE
DOWN THERE WITH
THEM...

"SLEEPING PEACEFULLY IN
YOUR BED, CONTENT IN THE
KNOWLEDGE THAT THE WORLD
AS YOU KNOW IT WOULD BE
THERE WHEN YOU WOKED UP."

THEY SAY THAT
IGNORANCE IS
BLISS.



IT SEEMS EVERY TIME
WE TURN AROUND LATELY,
WE'RE DEFENDING ALL OF
HUMANITY FROM SOME
NEW "THREAT."

AND USUALLY IT'S SOMETHING
THAT MAN, IN HIS MOST INTELLIGENT-
ANIMAL - ON - THE - PLANET ARROGANCE
HAS UNLEASHED UPON HIM-
SELF!

THE PHALANX WERE ORIGINALLY
DESIGNED TO BE "NEXT-YEAR'S-
MODEL" OF THE SENTINELS, A
TECHNO-ORGANIC VERSION OF THE
MUTANT-HUNTING ROBOTS...

BUT THEY
DEVELOPED FAR
BEYOND THE VISION
OF THEIR CREATORS--
GREW OUT OF CONTROL--
TO CONSUME EVERY
LIVING THING IN
THE WORLD !!

EXCUSE US...
UMM, MR. SUMMERS--

--ALEX--?



WE WERE WONDERING--

HAVOK--THE ENTIRE WORLD IS THREATENED WITH THE GENOCIDE OF THE HUMAN RACE...

...WHILE WE SIT HERE WAITING TO BE ATTACKED!!

YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE OUR FIELD-LEADER--

--AND SO FAR ALL WE'VE DONE IS, WELL...NOTHING, SIR.



NOTHING?
SORRY, MEN,
I BEG TO DIFFER.

WE'RE THE "CAVALRY" BOYS, THE REINFORCEMENTS. WE GO IN AND BAT "CLEAN-UP" IF ANY OF THE OTHERS RUN INTO TROUBLE. AND SO UNTIL WE'RE NEEDED.



...WE WAIT.

I'M SURPRISED SOMEONE AS FAMILIAR WITH BATTLE AS YOU ARE, WATTESTAR, WOULDN'T SEE THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS IN THAT.

WAITING IS DOING NOTHING!! IT IS UNACCEPTABLE!

YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A TEAM, AND WHILE YOU MAY NOT BE HAPPY WITH THE "BOREDOM" OF YOUR CURRENT ASSIGNMENT, THE TEAM IS WORKING, THE JOB IS GETTING DONE--

--THE BATTLE IS BEING WAGED..

"BACK IN THE STATES, THE ENTIRE MANSION HAS BEEN COMPROMISED... INFESTED WITH THE PHALANX, AND THE X-MEN ARE MISSING -- PRESUMABLY CAPTURED..."

"BANSHEE AND JUBILEE -- ALONG WITH SABRETOOTH AND THE WHITE QUEEN -- FOUND OUT THAT THE PHALANX HAVE TARGETED A HANDFUL OF NEO-MUTANTS --"

"--MOST LIKELY TRYING TO DETERMINE WHY THEY'RE UNABLE TO ASSIMILATE MUTANTS--"

"--THAT'S WHY THEY CONSIDER US SUCH A THREAT."

"BANSHEE IS LEADING THAT TEAM IN AN ATTEMPT TO LOCATE AND PROTECT WHAT THE PROFESSOR IS CALLING--THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUTANTS.*"

*SEE UNCANNY X-MEN #316
--BOOK ONE OF GENERATION NEXT--SUZANNE

"MEANWHILE, CHARLES HAS ALSO DISPATCHED WOLVERINE AND CABLE TO TRACK DOWN AND, IF NECESSARY, RESCUE THE MISSING X-MEN.***"

"THEY WERE JOINED BY THE NEWLYWEDS--
--LEAH AND SCOTT--
JUST BACK FROM THEIR HONEYMOON.***"

"BETWEEN THE FOUR OF THEM, THE X-MEN WILL BE IN GOOD HANDS."

*** IN FINAL SANCTION --
CABLE #6 & WOLVERINE #85
--SUZE

*** AS CHRONICLED IN THE ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS AND PHOENIX -- S.

AND WHAT DO
WE DO...?

WE STAND IDLY BY AS THREE
OF OUR FELLOWS ARE KID-
NAPPED AND SPITED
AWAY BY DOUGLOCK--

--WHO WOULD HAVE HAD US
BELIEVE THAT HE WAS A
RENEGADE PHILLY, BREAKING
AWAY FROM THEM LIFEN FINDING
HIMSELF POSSESSED OF AN
INDEPENDENT MIND.

HIS TRUE
FLURDIE BECOMING
QUITE **OBVIOUS** WITH
HIS ATTACK ON FORGE,
CANNONEALL, AND
WOLFSBANE.

AND **WHAT** IS OUR
REACTION TO THAT? WE
SPLIT OUR NUMBER IN HALF,
SENDING A TEAM AFTER
THEM--

--WHILE LEAVING
OUR **FIERCEST** AND
MOST **POWERFUL**
FIGHTERS **HERE!**

THIS
MISSION
REQUIRED A
CERTAIN AMOUNT
OF **STEALTH**.

IT **DOESN'T**
NEED SOME
COWBOY RIDING
IN ON HIS WHITE
HORSE, AND
BLOWING "CHARGE"
ON HIS BUGLE.

IF YOU THINK ABOUT
IT FOR A MOMENT,
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
WHY **YOUR** NAME
WASN'T ON OUR LIST.

HEH.
--JUST
THOUGHT
WED ASK.

KIDS!

WAS I EVER THAT
RASH AND **HOT-
HEADED**, CHARGING
THROUGH LIFE WITH
MY FISTS **FLAUNTING**
DOING MY THINKING
FOR ME...?

ACTUALLY, COME
TO THINK OF IT, I
BELIEVE, I WAS.

EL-SHIMERE.

SAVE HIS INITIAL COURAGE INTO DOUGLOCK, FORGE HAS BEEN IN A STATE MUCH AHEAD TO AHEAD.

UNABLE TO SHUT-DOWN HIS INSTINCT ABILITY TO "SEE" THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORKINGS OF THINGS, HE HAS BEEN OVERWHELMED AT THE SIGHT OF THE TECHNO-CRANE CHIMNEY THAT IS THE PHALANX.

HE IS HIGHLY AWARE OF HIS STRANGE STATE OF MIND AND HIS SURROUNDINGS. HE FEELS LISTLESS - CONTROLLED - COMPELLED TO CARRY OUT SHAMIR'S DESIGN.



BEHOLD
THE NEXT
GENERATION
OF THE
PHALANX--

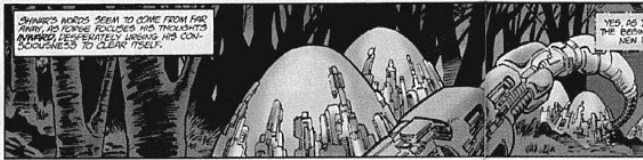
—MORE WARRIORS
TO PERPETRATE
OUR RACE!!

YOU, FORGE,
CALLED THE WARRIORS
HAVE BEEN CHOSEN
TO INSURE THEIR
EMERGENCE, FOR THEIR
SURVIVAL IS
PARAMOUNT.

HIS VOICE IS COLD,
BUT STILL FORGE
CANNOT BUT HELP
SEE THE LOGIC OF
HIS WORDS.

SHAMIR'S WORDS SEEM TO COME FROM FAR AWAY, AS FORGE FOCUSES HIS THOUGHTS INWARD, DESPERATELY LARGING HIS CONSCIOUSNESS TO CLEAR ITSELF.

YES, AS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW...





I PLACE
THEM IN YOUR
CHARGE--

--FOR ONLY YOU,
MAKER, CAN SEE THEM
FOR THEIR EFFICIENT
BEAUTY...

...THEIR
SINGULAR
PERFECTION.

INCREDIBLE.

THEY ARE
THE ULTIMATE
OF OUR RACE.

HIS VOICE IS COLD
BUT STILL FORGE
CANNOT BUT HELP
SEE THE LOGIC OF
HIS WORDS.

THEY
ARE THE
FUTURE...

REALLY? ALL I SEE IS
THE ERADICATION OF ALL
LIFE ON THIS PLANET!

YES, AS I SAID--IT IS
THE BEGINNING OF A
NEW DAWN!

YOU CAN SEE, CAN YOU NOT, THAT THE PHALANK WILL BE THE ULTIMATE VICTOR IN THIS CONTEST FOR DOMINANCE. WE ARE MORE ADAPTABLE, MORE EFFICIENT THAN HUMANS ON EVERY LEVEL...



...SIMPLY PUT OUR RACE IS FOR SUPERIOR AND DOESN'T NATURE DICTATE "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" ...?

THESE PODS REQUIRE A CONSTANT SUPPLY OF POWER, POWER THAT AT TIMES THE PHALANK DEEMS NECESSARY TO DIVERT TO OTHER OPERATIONS.



AT THIS POINT IN THE GESTATION OF THE PODS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE POWER NOT FLUCTUATE.



IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE THEM A STEADY SUPPLY UNTIL THE TIME OF THEIR EMERGENCE.



I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES, MAKER, YOU SEE IT. YOU WANT TO HELP US.

FORSE LOOKS DEEP INTO THE EYES OF THE PHALANK LEADER, FINDING ONLY THE COLD BLANK STARE OF A PREDATOR...

...HE STRUGGLES FOR POSSESSION OF HIS WILL...

...ONLY TO FIND HOW DEEPLY IT HAS BEEN CO-OPTED BY THE PHALANK.



YOU KNOW OUR WAY IS BEST.

IT IS A LONG AND ARDUOUS CLIMB...

MADE ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT BY THE GASPING...

-- CLUTCHING --

-- FLAILING --

HANDS AND ARMS OF THE HUMAN BEINGS THEY MAKE UP THE OUTER WALLS OF THE BABEL SPIRE.

THEY ARE VILLAGERS FROM THE TINY HAMLETS WHICH DOT THIS REMOTE EUROPEAN VALLEY, SWATCHED FROM THEIR BEDS BY THE PHALANX --

-- INCORPORATED INTO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TOWER LIKE SO MUCH MOISTAR AND WOOD.

UNABLE TO HELP THEM, DOUGLOCK CAN ONLY CONTINUE HIS JOURNEY TO THE TOP.

DOUG!

WHAT HAVE YE COME TO US ??

AN'LL TELL YA WHAT HE'S DOIN'--!

HE'S PLAYIN' US FOR THE FOOLS WE'VE BEEN--

--USIN' US FOR THIS STUPID BEACH LIKE THE REST O' HIS PHALANX BUDDIES DID WITH THESE FOOL FOLKS!!

HE'S BETRAYED OUR TRUST AN' HE--

SAM, DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE ???

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS !!!

SHUT UP

SHUT UP



MUTANTS
ARE AN
ANOMALY
TO THE
PHALANX--

--A
PHENOMENON
THAT THEY ARE
UNABLE TO
COMPREHEND.

YOUR BIO-SIGNATURES
ARE JUST STATIC TO
THEM-- INTERFERENCE--

--THEY CAN ASSIMILATE
HUMANS QUICKLY AND
EFFICIENTLY, BUT THEY
CANNOT DO THE SAME
WITH MUTANTS.

WHAT THE
HECK ARE
YOU TALKIN'
ABOUT..?



I WAS ONLY ABLE
TO ABSORB YOU
AND RAHNE DUE
TO YOUR TRUST IN
ME. YOUR FAITH
IN THAT WHAT I
WAS DOING WAS
RIGHT.

BY COMBINING YOUR
MUTANT ENGRAMS
WITH MINE, I WILL
BE ABLE TO ASCEND
THE TOWER
UNDETECTED--



--AND DESTROY
THE BISHOP
BEFORE THE SIGNAL
CAN BE SENT !!!



NO DOGS,
DOUG!...

THIS ISN'T THE
WAY WE WORK--

--IF WE'RE GONNA CLIMB THIS
BEACON-- SHUT IT DOWN BEFORE
IT STARTS TRANSMITTIN'!...

--WE DO IT
TOGETHER!!

THE THREE
OF US--

--NOT TWO OF
US ABSORBED
BY THE OTHER.



DOGS--WE DYNNAE
ABSORB--THAT'S THE
PHALANX IN YE
TALKIN'--

--WE NEED T'WORK
AS THE TEAM WE ONCE
WERE T'KNOW EACH OTHER
AN' RELY ON ONE ANOTHER'S
STRENGTHS.

'TIS NAE VERY EFFICIENT,
BUT IT'S US-- 'TIS THE HUMAN
SPIRIT IN US WORKIN'
TOGETHER...

VERY WELL,
WE WILL TRY IT
YOUR WAY.

IT SLICES THROUGH THE SKIES ABOVE THE MIDNIGHT COUNTRYSIDE IN SILENCE--



--HAVING NO ENGINE OR MOTOR TO SPEAK OF--IT MOVES DEEPER AND DEEPER BEHIND ENEMY LINES.

DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED BY FORGE, THE EMO-CRAFT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A SHELL--A REINFORCED METALLIC SPHERE--

--POWERED SOLELY BY THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC MANIPULATIONS OF IT'S PILOT-- LORNA DANE--

--POLARIS.

COMPRISED OF ONLY NON-TECHNOLOGICAL COMPONENTS, IT'S CREW.

DAYTRIPPER

SHADOWCAT

BOOMBOOM

RICTOR

SIRYN

RELIEVES THAT THE PHALANX WILL BE UNABLE TO ACCESS OR THE TINY SHIP...

ANYTHING YET?

IT IS KURT WAGNER'S HOPE THAT THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO INFECT IT SO WELL.

WELL, ACCORDING TO THE SONAR WAVES THAT SIRYN IS PUTTING OUT--

--WE'VE SCOPED NADIA IN THE WAY OF PHALANX.

AS A MATTER OF FACT--

--THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE--

...NOTHING AT ALL.



ER...
--UM...
--HEY--
--KIT-KAT--



TRUTHA-- THE WAY MY LIFE HAS
BEEN LONG LATELY... I DON'T
KNOW IF I'M EVER GONNA
BE "OKAY" AGAIN.

AFTER
LOSING
ILLYANA--
LOSING
RACHEL--

--MY
FATHER
HAS
MYSTERIOUSLY
DISAPPEARED--

--I MEAN,
ARE YOU GONNA
BE --OKAY?--



I DON'T
KNOW--

--"OKAY"
SEEMS
SO FAR
AWAY.

HEY, IT'S ALL
RELATIVE, I--
Y'KNOW?

LIKE SOMETIMES THINGS
GET REALLY CRAZED AND
YOU JUST CAN'T TAKE IT
ANYMORE--



--AND THEN
JUST WHEN YOU
THINK IT CAN'T
GET ANY WORSE,
IT DOES.

SO THEN YOU
THINK-- "Y'KNOW
THAT FIRST PART
WASN'T REALLY
THAT BAD..."

BOOVER-- IS
THERE A
POINT HERE?

WELL, I--
"OKAY" IS
WHAT YOU
MAKE IT.

BY THE
EARTH
RINGS...!!



PAYDIRT, BOSS!
WE'VE HIT THE
MOTHERLODE!

THIS PLACE IS
LITERALLY
CRAWLING
WITH
PHALANX!

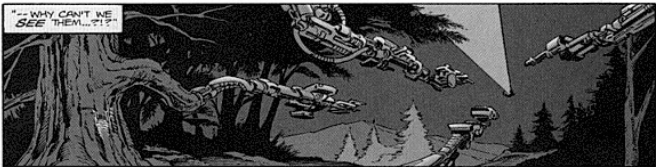
MEIN GOTT!
HOW CAN
THIS BE?



THE RADAR
REGISTERS SUCH
A DENSE GROUPING
OF THEM--

--AND YET
WHY DO WE NOT
HAVE A VISUAL
ON THEM--

"-- WHY CAN'T WE
SEE THEM...?!?"



ALL
RIGHT--

--LORNA--
TAKE US DOWN--
NOW!

EVERY THING THE
PHALANX DOES IS
CONTINGENT ON
LOGIC--THEY DON'T
MAKE A MOVE UNLESS
IT'S BASED ON SOME
GOOD SOLID
REASONING--

-- AND PROBABLY
CHECKED AND DOUBLE-
CHECKED AT THE PHALANX
"HEAD OFFICE"--THEIR
COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE.

ANY ACTION ON THEIR PART
IS LOGICAL AND RATIONAL--

--AND THEY EXPECT
THE SAME FROM
US!

THE ONLY
WAY THEN TO
DEFEAT THE
PHALANX IS TO
DO THE UN-
EXPECTED--THE
ILLOGICAL--

--AND JUST
KEEP THEM
GUESSING.



SO IN THE WORDS OF MY
GOOD FRIEND, BOOMER--



LORNA...

"--LET'S BLOW THIS
POPCICLE STAND!!!"



LET'S
TAKE IT TO
THEM
GANG !!



HIT THEM HARD,
AND FIRST AND KEEP
THEM OFF-BALANCE!

NOT FAR
OFF--

CHOOM!
CHOOM!

NO !!!

THEY ARE ATTACKING THE
BLESSED TOWER--ATTEMPT-
ING TO TEAR DOWN THE
SPIRE !!!

I MUST GO
AND STOP THEM
NOW!

I WILL SEE THESE
WALKING BLOOD SACKS
ALL DEAD BEFORE I
SEE OUR DEACON
DESTROYED!

WHAT ?

HIS HANDS AND MIND
WORK FEVERISHLY CAUSING
AND STABILIZING THE POWER
TO THE PODS--

--ALL THE WHILE WAGING A
DESPERATE BATTLE FOR
CONTROL WITHIN...

AND YET WE STAND AMONGST MY
BACK-UP PLAN, FOR SHOULD THE
TOWER FALL THESE PODS SHALL
YIELD FOOTH A VERITABLE LEGION
OF PHALANX WARRIORS--

--EACH ONE CONSUMED
WITH CONTINUING MY PEOPLE'S
LEGACY!

AND HOW DO YOU FACE WITH
YOUR DUTIES, MAKER ?

BLAST YOU,
SHIVAR--
YOU'RE
MANIPULATING
ME--

--FORCING
ME TO HELP YOU
AND THE
PARASITES YOU
WANT TO
SPREAD!

YES--YES
I AM...

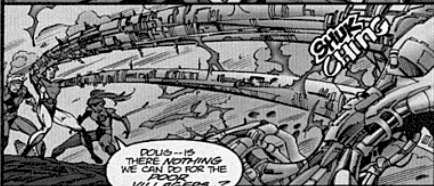
IT HAS
BEGIN--

--THE BEACON HAS
BEEN ACTIVATED!

THE PHALANX ARE POWERING
IT UP-- PREPARING TO TRANS-
MIT THEIR DESPERATE MESSAGE
ACROSS THE COSMOS.

NO, THERE IS STILL
TIME FOR US TO RE-
PROGRAM THE
BEACON -- TO
SCRAMBLE THE
MESSAGE--

--AND REDIRECT
THE TRANSMISSION
AWAY FROM ITS
INTENDED
COURSE!



DOUG-- IS
THERE ANYTHING
WE CAN DO FOR THE
POOR
VILLAGERS...?

...ANY WAY
T' REVERSE WHAT
THE PHALANX HAVE
DONE T' THEM?



THESE
MURKINS WERE
CO-OPTED BY THE
PHALANX, RAINE--
THEIR LIFE-ENERGIES
ARE BEING USED AS
A CONDUIT FOR
THE ENERGY THAT
POWERS THE
BEACON.

IF THAT POWER
WERE BLOCKED, THOSE
LIFE ENERGIES WOULD
BE "BACKED-UP" --
PUSHED BACK INTO THE
VILLAGERS' BODIES.

TO "JAM" THE ENERGY FLOW,
HOWEVER, WOULD NECESSITATE
THE SACRIFICE OF A SINGLE
LIFE FORM --



I'LL
DO THAT.

SEEING AS THIS WHOLE MESS
IS PRETTY MUCH MY FAULT...

AT THE BASE
OF THE SPIRE--

REMEMBER,
EVERYBODY--

--THAT TOWER IS MADE
OF PEOPLE-- INNOCENT
VILLAGERS WHO HAVE BEEN
MESMERIZED BY THE
PHALANX--

--SO BE
CAREFUL !!!

FIGHT
HARD-- BUT BE
CAREFUL !

WE CAN'T
RISK KILLING
ANY OF THOSE
PEOPLE !!

NO !! YOU
CANNOT !!!

CRACK!!

SHRUK



FIP FIP
Boom
Boom



HUMANITY IS
DOOMED!! --001011--

THE PHALANK IS
EVERYWHERE -- AND
ONCE THE BEACON IS
ACTIVATED, YOUR NILE
RACE WILL BE BUT A
MEMORY IN THE --1001
-- HISTORY OF THIS
PLANET !

AND
ONCE OUR FORE-
BEARERS EMERGE
-- WE WILL
BURY YOU !!

YOU MAY HAVE WON THIS
BATTLE HERE, BUT EVEN NOW
YOUR OWN FEARFUL LABORS
TO ASSURE OUR SUCCESS !!



MEANWHILE...AT THE TOP OF THE BEACON...

SAM--YE MUS' BE DAFT!!

HOW COULD YE POSSIBLY BELIEVE THAT YE'D BE RESPONSIBLE F'R ANY O' THIS ?!?



'CAUSE DOUG DIED ON MY WATCH...

...AH WAS LEADIN' TH' NEW MUTANTS WHEN HE WAS...

...WHEN YOU WERE...

THAT MAKES ME RESPONSIBLE F'R EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED AFTERWARDS.

SAM--WHILE I AM NOT DOUG RAMSEY--AS MUCH AS EVERYONE, IT SEEMS WOULD LIKE ME TO BE--

--I DO HAVE A LIMITED ACCESS TO HIS MEMORIES. I KNOW HOW HE FELT ABOUT YOU. I KNOW HE WOULD NEVER BLAME YOU FOR HIS DEATH.

WHA--?

DOUG-- NO!!!

CHOOSH!!

JUST AS I KNOW HE WOULD NEVER ASK YOU TO DO SOMETHING THAT IS HIS PLACE TO DO...



NO, DOUG. NO.

WE CANNAE LOSE YE AGAIN...

THE POD
GARDEN.

FORGE!!

SIRYN SAID
THERE WAS AN
OUTLYING CLUSTER
OF READ--

VAS
IST...?

FORGE--WHAT
IN THE NAME
OF GOD ARE
YOU DOING!!

WE'LL
FIGHT
IT!!

YOU'RE NOT
JUST A MUTANT,
MEIN FREUND--
YOU ARE A HUMAN
AS WELL. DRAW
ON THAT--

--ON THE STRENGTH OF
YOUR CONVICTIONS AS A HUMAN--
DRAW ON THE PART OF YOU THAT
IS THE *MOST* HUMAN.

THEY'RE MAKING ME
HELP THEM--DRAWING
OUT EVERY IMPULSE
OF MY MUTANT
ABILITIES!!

DRAW ON YOUR
HUMAN SPIRIT.

FORGE-- IF
THESE PHALANK
EMERGE--

--IF THEY GET
THE CHANCE
TO BE RE-
LEASED ONTO
MANKIND--

--THERE'LL BE NO
MORE LIFE AS WE
KNOW IT-- NO MORE
MUSIC OR ART--
NO MORE MAGIC--

--NO
MORE
US!!

LOOK--
THEY'RE GLOWING--
THEY'LL BE OPEN-
ING ANY MINUTE--
YOU HAVE TO
STOP THEM
NOW!

I UNDERSTAND
KURT-- BUT THEY'RE
FORCING ME TO
KEEP CREATING--
WAIT-- MAYBE IF I
CAN HARNESS MY
MUTANT POWER
FOR JUST A
SECOND--

--I CAN FORCE
MYSELF TO CREATE
SOMETHING THAT
WILL BLOCK THE
POWER TO THE
FOOD!

hurr--

AAAAAAAAARRGH!

FIGHT IT,
MEIN FREUND,
FIGHT IT!!

THEIR
INFLUENCE
--ugh!--
IS SO
STRONG--

--TOO
STRONG--

I DON'T
KNOW,
KURT...

I DON'T
KNOW IF I
CAN DO IT...

CHOOOOON!!

OH,
POLIS---

SAM---
DO YE
THINK---

HE'S
GONE!
RAHNE---

--AH
--AH DON'T
THINK HE
MADE IT---

THE RESULTS OF ROUGLOCK'S
ACTIONS ARE SPECTACULAR--

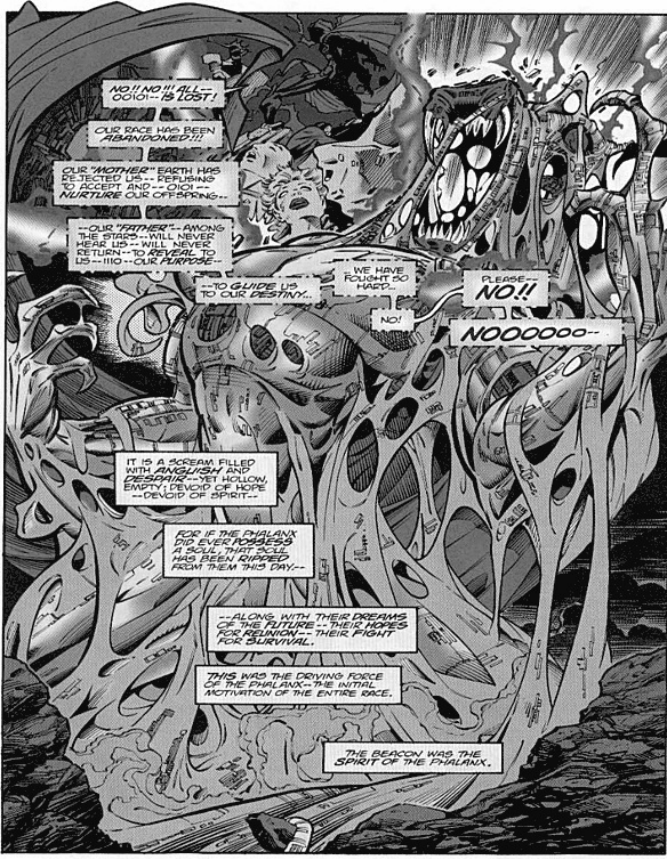
--AS THE TRANSMISSION
OF THE BEACON IS JAMMED--
THE *LIFE* ENERGIES ARE
RETURNED TO THE ALIEN
HOSTS FROM WHICH THEY
WERE STOLEN!!

WITH THE "LIVING CIRCUIT"
WHICH WAS THE BEACON NOW
BROKEN--UNCHECKED ENERGIES
BOMBARD THE TECHNO-ORGANIC
BINDINGS OF THE TOWER--

--OVERLOADING THE PHALANK
WITH POWER IT COULD NEVER
DARE TO HARNESS!!

THE EXPLOSION CAN BE SEEN
AND HEARD THROUGHOUT THE
VALLEY, AND AS THE EARTH
SPRINGS FORTH, THERE IS A SOUND
THAT RISES UP AND ABOVE THE
CACOPHONOUS DIN OF DESTRUCTION--

--IT IS THE SOUND OF THE
PHALANK SCREAMING!!



NO!! NO!! ALL--
OOOI!-- IS LOST!

OUR RACE HAS BEEN
ABANDONED!!!

OUR "MOTHER" EARTH HAS
REJECTED US-- REFUSING
TO ACCEPT AND-- OIOI!--
NURTURE OUR OFFSPRING--

--OUR "FATHER"-- AMONG
THE STARS-- WILL NEVER
HEAR US-- WILL NEVER
RETURN-- TO REVEAL TO
US-- IIIO-- OUR PURPOSE--

--TO GUIDE US
TO OUR DESTINY--

WE HAVE
FOUGHT SO
HARD--

PLEASE--
NO!!

NO!

NOOOOOO--

IT IS A SCREAM FILLED
WITH ANGUISH AND
DESPAIR--YET HOLLOW,
EMPTY; DEVOID OF HOPE
--DEVOID OF SPIRIT--

FOR IF THE PHALANX
DID EVER POSSESS
A SOUL THAT SOUL
HAS BEEN RIPPED
FROM THEM THIS DAY--

--ALONG WITH THEIR DREAMS
OF THE FUTURE-- THEIR HOPES
FOR REUNION-- THEIR FIGHT
FOR SURVIVAL.

THIS WAS THE DRIVING FORCE
OF THE PHALANX--THE INITIAL
MOTIVATION OF THE ENTIRE RACE.

THE BEACON WAS THE
SPIRIT OF THE PHALANX.





I DID IT!!!

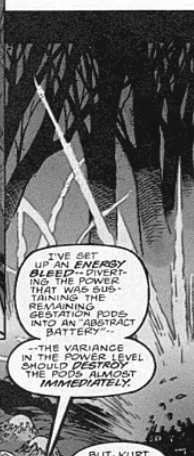


...THESE WERE SHINAR'S FAIL-SAFE--

--HIS GRUESOME PLAN TO INSURE THE PHALANY'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

BUT IT WAS MY POWER-- CO-OPTED AND MANIPULATED AS IT WAS-- WHICH WAS NEARLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PHALANY'S SUCCESS-- AND THE END OF ALL ORGANIC LIFE ON THIS PLANET.

MY POWER... MY MUTANT GIFT...



I'VE SET UP AN **ENERGY BLEED**-- DIVERTING THE POWER THAT WAS SUSTAINING THE REMAINING GESTATION PODS INTO AN "ABSTRACT BATTERY"--

--THE VARIANCE IN THE POWER LEVEL SHOULD DESTROY THE PODS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.



BUT, KURT-- IT WAS SO CLOSE...



BUT IT WAS YOUR **HUMANITY** THAT SAVED THE DAY-- THAT FOUGHT BACK...

I DON'T KNOW, KURT--



--WAS IT MY HUMANITY I WAS FIGHTING WITH--



--OR MY
HUMANITY I
WAS FIGHTING
FOR...!

THE
END

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